

Saltsjöbaden Declaration

The Ministers of Environment of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, The Russian Federation, Sweden and The Commissioner of Environment And Nuclear Safety of The European Commission, or Their Representatives

Meeting in Saltsjöbaden, Sweden, 20-21 October 1996.

1. Preamble

1.1. Recognizing that the political and economic reforms and economic restructuring in the Baltic Sea Region, as well as overall environment priorities, provide unique opportunities for ensuring that economic growth be compatible with environmental concerns, thereby contributing to security and sustainable development in the region as a whole. The Region has great potential as a link between the European Union and its partners in the European Economic Area on the one hand, and the countries in transition in Europe on the other;

1.2. Recognizing that the ongoing process to enlarge the European Union is of profound significance for the further strengthening of environmental co-operation in the Baltic Sea region;

1.3. Welcoming the outcome of the Visby Summit 3-4 May 1996, as reflected in the Presidency Declaration and the subsequent adoption of the Action Programmes for the Baltic Sea States by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs at their meeting as the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) in Kalmar, 2-3 July 1996, and the call for the development of an Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region as expressed at these two occasions;

1.4. Welcoming the European Commission's Baltic Sea Region Initiative which provides a basis for a more active involvement of the European Commission in international regional environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region;

1.5. Also Welcoming the outcome of the Pan-European Environment Ministers Conference held at Sofia, Bulgaria, 24-25 October 1995 noting that the next Pan-European Conference will be held in Denmark in June 1998, and in this context, **being convinced** that the Baltic Sea regional cooperation constitutes a substantial contribution to the Environment for Europe process and provides an example of a pro-active regional approach to effectively solving environmental problems and moving towards sustainable development;

1.6 Also Welcoming the decisions taken at the Helsinki European Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, June 1994, to charge the respective health and environment ministries to jointly develop National Environmental Health Action Plans (NEHAPs).

This initiative may also serve as an appropriate framework for increasing the collaboration of the environment and health sectors. The next European Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health will be held in London in 1999;

1.7. Noting the outcome of the meeting of the IVth European Conference of Ministers responsible for the Cultural Heritage, Helsinki, 30-31 May 1996, with its emphasis on sustainable use of the heritage;

1.8. Recalling the decisions taken by the Heads of Government at the Ronneby Conference in 1990 on the development of the Baltic Sea Joint Comprehensive Environmental Action Programme (JCP);

1.9. Recalling the decisions taken by the Diplomatic Conferences and the Ministerial meetings of the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), such as the adoption of the JCP and the signing of the new Helsinki Convention in 1992 and financing of the JCP in 1993, all of which underline the instrumental role played by HELCOM in following up, coordinating and implementing the environmental aspects of the Action Programmes for the Baltic Sea States Cooperation according to its mandate;

1.10. Noting the considerable progress made in the implementation of the HELCOM JCP and the contributions by donors and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to this process;

1.11. Lending their full support to the further implementation of the HELCOM JCP according to the priorities and work programme set up by the Programme Implementation Task Force (HELCOM PITF) and the up-dating and strengthening of the JCP;

1.12. Noting the transnational and cross sectoral approach taken by the ministers responsible for spatial planning, expressed in the report "Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea 2010" and that the Ministers responsible for spatial planning will hold their 4th Conference in conjunction with this meeting;

1.13. Realizing that additional concerted action is needed within the whole Baltic Sea Region (BSR) in order to prevent and avoid further environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity facing the region;

1.14. Recognizing that this will require deepening of the environmental cooperation to also include issues and problem areas presently not covered or insufficiently dealt with. In this process the integration of environmental concerns into all relevant policies and economic sectors will be indispensable;

1.15. Determined to fully implement the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity as well as to take full account of decisions taken by the UN Conference on Environment and Development, and other international agreements of importance to achieving sustainable development in the BSR;

1.16. Welcoming regional, national and local endeavours to implement Agenda 21 adopted by the UNCED and its regional application in the BSR as well as the involvement of NGO's and other major groups in these endeavours;

1.17. Determined to start the development of an Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region in order to secure sustainable development and contribute to security and stability of the region;

Have agreed on the following:

2. An Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region

2.1 Consistent with the Presidency Declaration by the Heads of Government at their meeting in Visby, May 1996, to immediately start the development of an Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region in accordance with the provisions and modalities laid down in this declaration. They express their readiness to jointly and individually take concerted action in pursuance of these goals.

2.2 Sustainable Development of the Baltic Sea Region is the objective in developing an Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region. An integrated approach is fundamental to achieving this objective.

2.3 The opening up of new markets through economic and political reforms and growing cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region increases the need and provides the opportunities for sustainable development in order to achieve a long lasting prosperity and security of the Region.

2.4 The emphasis of an Agenda 21 for the BSR must be on regional cooperation, meaning that priorities and structures must emanate from the common sharing of environmental priorities and development needs. The regional problems of the area should be the driving forces. A regional Agenda 21 must not duplicate or upscale national or local Agendas 21, nor can it follow the structure of the original Agenda 21. It must therefore find its own logical structure and bring added value to the process. An Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region should emphasize environmental, including health, and spatial planning aspects of sustainable development in the region.

2.5 In the development of an Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region it is necessary to build on the work already carried out within international fora in the region such as the HELCOM, the International Baltic Sea Fishery Commission and the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). The HELCOM JCP should continue to be a basis for joint action as well as being an important element in the elaboration of an Agenda 21 for the BSR. Furthermore VASAB 2010, which aims at incorporating environmental factors fully into a concept of flexible and dynamic planning, should be integrated into the development process and form a part of a future Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region. The work should also take fully into consideration interregional cooperation, for example within the Barents Euro-Arctic Region and the North Sea cooperation, as well as subregional cooperation, including local authorities.

2.6 The work within relevant international processes and agreements on a regional or global scale, such as the Environment for Europe process, the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC), the Convention on Biodiversity and the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution and its associated protocols should be taken actively into account when developing an Agenda 21 for the BSR.

Countries in the BSR should act jointly in implementing these agreements, as well as other agreements negotiated within the United Nations/Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE) within the region and act to influence these instruments in a way that is beneficial to the BSR. Countries who have still not ratified these agreements, including the 1992 Helsinki Convention, are urged to do so.

2.7 An Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea region must take full account of the EU dimension as, i.a., discussed in the Action Programmes adopted in Kalmar.

2.8 The economic sectors of society should take on the responsibility for adjusting to a sustainable development by integrating considerations of the environment and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources into policy and economic decisions at all levels. The private sector must be fully involved. Countries and regional governmental organisations should integrate environmental and health obligations into all policies and sectors of the economy to ensure that environmental concerns are effectively dealt with.

2.9 The economic sectors of crucial importance for sustainable development in the region for which integration of environmental concerns seems particularly necessary are agriculture, energy, fishery, forestry, industry, tourism, transport.

Agriculture focuses on good agricultural practices available to substantially reduce the leakage and emission of nutrients and the use of pesticides, and promotion of less intensive farming methods.

Energy focuses on energy efficiency and renewable energy sources as well as on safety and health implications of all types of energy production and use including the safety of existing nuclear facilities.

Fishery focuses on keeping the natural fish stocks i.a. natural reproducing Salmonids within the Baltic Sea Area in a sustainable condition.

Forestry focuses on sustainable forestry practices which would contribute to preservation of biodiversity.

Industry focuses on cleaner production by applying Best Environmental Practice (BEP) and Best Available Technology (BAT).

Tourism focuses on development of a sustainable and environmentally sound tourism specially within the coastal and mountain areas.

Transport (land, air and sea) focuses on minimizing its environmental impacts (air pollution, oil discharges, noise etc), its impacts on natural and cultural environment as well as on the maintaining and improvement of public transport systems.

Attention should also be paid to municipalities and urban systems, coastal zones, the open sea and valuable natural and cultural areas.

2.10 Ministers responsible for the sectors and areas listed above, are called upon to participate in and support the Agenda 21 process in accordance with the Visby Summit and the Kalmar Communiqué.

2.11 Reports on the progress in the development of an Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region should be prepared for the 1997 Summit Meeting of the Heads of Government in the Baltic Sea Region, the CSD 5 (Commission on Sustainable Development) and the Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1997 on the follow up of the UNCED, and the Environment for Europe Conference in Denmark in June 1998. Progress report and final results should also be communicated to CBSS.

2.12 An Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region should be ready for consideration in the first half of 1998. This Agenda 21 should be adopted at the highest possible political level.

2.13 The process of developing an Agenda 21 for the BSR should be democratic, transparent and open to participation of all actors, including NGOs and indigenous peoples. Education and information are vital in order to strengthen participation and support the Agenda 21 process. In order to facilitate a broad public participation and access to necessary environmental information, the ongoing preparations under UN/ECE auspices of a convention on this subject should be concluded as soon as possible.

3. Organisation of work for an Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region

3.1 In the elaboration of an Agenda 21 for the BSR a number of different sectors and governmental and non-governmental actors will be involved. In line with the mandate given by the Visby summit and the CBSS in Kalmar Environment Ministers should play an initiating and liaising role in relation to other Ministers and sectors involved, but the responsibility rests with all sectors and Ministers to elaborate a regional Agenda 21. It is clear that a number of proposals will emanate as a result of this process that address the intergovernmental level. However, other proposals will deal with development in other sectors, including non-governmental, and should be dealt with by responsible groups or organisations directly.

3.2. The Agenda 21 document could cover, i.a. the following elements:

- Definition of goals for achieving sustainable development, taking into account existing mechanisms
- Evaluation of activities relevant to sustainable development undertaken so far and identification of obstacles and gaps
- Scenarios for the key sectors indicating a path to sustainable development and associated policy changes implied

- Action programme for sustainable development, including targets, monitoring methods, time frames, actors and financing

3.3 A Senior Officials Group (SOG) is formed in order to closely monitor, contribute to and steer the process of developing the Agenda 21 for the BSR and provide a forum for the negotiation of the document. Participants are government representatives, representatives of the NGOs, IGOs and the IFIs.

SOG should, to the extent possible, meet back to back with the Helcom PITF and the VASAB Task Force to keep down the number of independent international meetings. Such back to back meetings would also help coordination between the different bodies.

3.4 All countries and other actors in the region are invited to contribute to the work on an Agenda 21 for the BSR. In addition, Sweden will provide secretariat services as well as other resources for one and a half year to contribute to the additional work that has to be carried out.

An important task will be to coordinate as well as to initiate activities addressing the subject areas above with the aim of providing input to the Agenda 21. The SOG has the responsibility for this function drawing on the secretariat services provided.

There should be no duplication of work going on elsewhere and the SOG should concentrate on the gaps and areas which are not sufficiently dealt with elsewhere.

3.5 The work within VASAB is now focusing on implementation. The overall aim is to promote sustainable and balanced development as well as economic and social cohesion within the region. It is essential to ensure close cooperation and coordination between VASAB and the Agenda 21 process. This can be achieved, inter alia, through contacts between the secretariat functions and participation of representatives from VASAB in the work of an Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region and vice versa.

4. The Visby Summit, CBSS and the Programmes of Action

The environment ministers assume full responsibility for the implementation of those commitments in the action programmes adopted by the meeting of the Council of the Baltic Sea States in July 1996 falling under their competence. They note in particular, i.a.

The up-dating and strengthening of the JCP and the instrumental role of HELCOM and the JCP in the development of an Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region, including i.a. financial support to waste handling and waste water treatment

The continuous reduction of discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances thereby moving towards the target of their cessation within one generation (25 years)

The expeditious implementation of the HELCOM Strategy for Port Reception Facilities and the HELCOM assessment of future environmental risks of increased handling and transportation of oil in the Baltic Sea Region

The strengthening of actions to further limit emissions and leakages of nutrients from agriculture consistent with the goal to restore the ecological balance of the Baltic Sea, and the development of an annex to the Helsinki Convention on agriculture

The development of a coherent policy for sustainable fishing in the Baltic Sea based on a comprehensive plan to be elaborated by the Baltic Sea Fisheries Commission in consultation with HELCOM and ICES

The protection of biodiversity and nature conservation, including the further development of integrated coastal zone management

Development of action programmes for transboundary water courses

5. Financing

5.1 It is recognized that, in general, the financing of environmental expenditures should be based on the "polluter pays principle" (PPP). Domestic financing by the countries in transition in the BSR is decisive. For some of these countries it is insufficient, however, to tackle all of the serious environmental problems of the region and external financial resources will continue to be important as a catalyst.

5.2 Continued efforts should be made, as appropriate, to establish legal and regulatory incentives in the BSR to comply with environmental standards and regulations, implement the PPP, and in particular progressively remove subsidies on energy and the use of natural resources, and establish cost-recovery mechanisms.

5.3 Ministers welcome the collaborative efforts by bilateral and multilateral donors, IFIs and the private sector to the implementation of JCP. Strengthened financial efforts are needed to ensure the implementation of this programme.

5.4 The IFIs, who already have taken a proactive part in the financing of the JCP, are invited to further strengthen their active involvement in the implementation of the HELCOM JCP and other major environmental projects contributing to sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region. Ministers call upon the IFIs, in particular European Bank For Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), European Investment Bank (EIB), the Nordic Investment Bank (NIB) and World Bank (WB), to provide their most favourable terms and conditions for environmental investments in both public and private sectors. Furthermore, the IFIs should assist the development of the domestic banking sector capable of mobilising resources for environmental investments, in accordance with the IFI mandate and sound project finance principles.

5.5. In this respect the Nordic governments have established financing institutions and mechanisms which provide financing to environmental projects in the BSR. Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO) which recently has doubled its capital base, provides "green" equity financing of environmental projects and a softening facility has been included which is aimed at making environmental projects more financially viable. The heads of the Nordic governments have in August 1996 decided to establish a facility with a guarantee frame of 100 million ECU for environmental loans within the NIB. Both these facilities should serve to catalyze loans from other IFIs and further resources from the Phare and Tacis programmes.

5.6 Ministers call upon the European Union to strengthen its actions in the BSR and to use all financing mechanisms (Phare, Tacis, LIFE, INTERREG) available to the BRS in a most efficient way.

5.7 Recipient countries are called on to increase their share of Phare and Tacis funding for environmental projects and to at least reach the 10 % level of Phare funding. The EU is invited to respond favourably to requests for such an increase with regard to Phare and Tacis funds for assistance in the field of the environment and sustainable development in the BSR.

5.8 Steps should be taken to strengthen the exchange of information on technical assistance projects to achieve the most efficient use of scarce resources. The main responsibility for this coordination rests with the receiving governments.

5.9 The SOG is invited to consider financing of the Agenda 21 for the BSR and to make appropriate recommendations thereon.